

PERSONAL ELECTRONIC DEVICES

The Board of Education recognizes that students may have personal electronic devices that can perform different functions. Such devices include “internet-enabled devices” defined as: any smartphone, tablet, smartwatch or other device capable of connecting to the internet and enabling the user to access content on the internet, including social media applications, but do not include any such device supplied by the district for educational purposes. These devices can create significant distraction to the school environment, negatively impact student mental health, contribute to disciplinary infractions, and reduce student engagement. Additionally, in an emergency, the use of personal electronic devices can distract students from following the directions of staff or emergency responders, contribute to the spread of misinformation, create congestion in the emergency response system, and interfere with the district’s emergency response protocols.

The district provides students with one-to-one devices; therefore, personal electronic devices are not permitted for educational purposes. Generally, the district is not responsible for stolen, lost or damaged personal electronic devices brought to school.

Communication with Parents/Persons in Parental Relation

During the school day, to minimize distractions, parents (which, for purposes of this policy, includes persons in parental relation) may contact their children by calling the school office. Students may contact their parents by calling from a school landline telephone. The district will notify parents in writing of the communication protocol at the beginning of each school year and upon enrollment.

Device Access and Storage

As required by Education Law §2803, this policy prohibits student use of personal internet-enabled devices during the school day (including all classes, homeroom periods, lunch, recess, study halls, and passing time), on school grounds [any building, structure, athletic playing field, playground, or land contained within the boundary of a school or district or BOCES facility unless under an exception (e.g., IEP/Section 504 or as permitted below)].

1. At the elementary school level (Pre-K–3), any device that is brought to school must be silenced and kept in the child’s backpack in their cubby.
2. At the middle school level (Grades 4-8), student devices must be silenced and stored out of sight: in student lockers or in cubbies/on hooks where backpacks are stored throughout the day.

Students are discouraged from bringing other personal electronic devices to school. If students do bring such devices to school, they must be stored away for the entire school day in

locations such lockers or cubbies, and they must be off or silenced and not used during the school day unless permission is granted by the school.

On a case-by-case basis, administrators may choose to allow use of electronic devices during school events and activities held outside of the school day and/or off school grounds. If allowed, this will be clearly communicated to students and parents prior to said event.

Exceptions for Specific Purposes

Use of personal internet-enabled devices must be permitted where included in a student's Individualized Education Program, Section 504 plan, or where required by law. Additionally, the district permits the use of internet-enabled devices in the event of an emergency, and under the following circumstances:

1. Where necessary to manage a student's healthcare (e.g., diabetes, asthma, medication, etc.); and/or
2. For translation services (as recommended by the building administrator after consultation with parent and ENL teacher); and/or
3. For students who are routinely responsible for the documented care and wellbeing of a family member (on a case-by-case basis, upon review and determination by a school psychologist, school social worker, or school counselor).

Parents may request an exception for their children to use personal internet-enabled devices during the school day as listed above. Requests must be made to the Building Principal, and for healthcare exceptions or family care exception, must include documentation from an appropriate healthcare professional.

Enforcement, Consequences and Reporting

Enforcement of this policy is chiefly the responsibility of building administrative staff; however, all designated employees are expected to assist in enforcement. Students will be reminded of this policy regularly and consistently, especially at the start of the school year and after returning from breaks.

For students out of compliance with this policy, the device will be held in the school office until the end of the school day. The first time this happens, the student may retrieve the device, and the parent will be notified. For subsequent instances, the parent must retrieve the device. The district will exercise reasonable care to maintain the security of devices that are held by the district, but cannot guarantee the devices will be secure. Further instances will result in the device being held in the school office daily for longer periods of time and enforced under the Code of Conduct. The district may not impose out of school suspension if the sole grounds for the suspension is that the student accessed an internet-enabled device as prohibited by this policy. However, the district may utilize consequences under the district's Code of Conduct, including detention, in-school suspension, and exclusion from extracurricular activities. The district may also utilize assignments on the detrimental impact of social media on mental health, smartphones in school, or other relevant topics.

Some uses of personal electronic devices may constitute a violation of the school district Code of Conduct or other district policies, and in some instances, the law. The district will cooperate with law enforcement officials as appropriate.

For students with exceptions under this policy, the district will examine alternative ways to achieve the purpose of the exception, including different storage or access provisions. Students with exceptions to this policy may still be subject to disciplinary measures if found to be using their personal device outside the reason for exception.

Administrators will also discuss the aims of this policy with students and their parents, the benefits of a distraction-free environment, the reasons the student had difficulty following this policy, and how the district can help the student contribute to a distraction-free environment.

Beginning September 1, 2026 and annually thereafter, the district will publish an annual report on its website detailing the enforcement of this policy over the past year, including non-identifiable demographic information of students who have faced disciplinary action for non-compliance with this policy, and an analysis of any demographic disparities in enforcement of this policy. If a statistically significant disparate enforcement impact is identified, the report will include a plan to mitigate such disparate enforcement.

Electronic Devices and Testing

To ensure the integrity of testing, in accordance with state guidelines, students may not bring cell phones or other personal electronic devices into classrooms or other exam locations during state assessments.

Test proctors, monitors and school officials have the right to collect cell phones and other prohibited electronic devices prior to the start of the test and to hold them for the duration of the test taking time. Admission to the test will be prohibited to any student who has a cell phone or other electronic device in their possession and does not relinquish it.

Students with Individualized Education Plans, Section 504 Plans, or documentation from medical practitioners specifically requiring use of electronic devices may do so as specified.

Staff Usage of Cell Phones

As part of the District's commitment to a distraction-free learning environment, any staff member in a location on campus with students present, will not use their personal cell phone. Staff may use their personal cell phone on breaks, during their lunch periods, or any time students are not present. An exception to this would be for a documented medical need, to take pictures during an event, a school emergency, or a personal emergency (at which time coverage can be requested to privately address their situation).

Policy Distribution and Translation

As required by law, the district will post this policy in a clearly visible and accessible location on its website. Upon request by a student or parent, the district will translate this policy into any of the most common non-English languages spoken by limited-English proficient

individuals in the state, as identified by the most recent American community survey published by the U.S. Census bureau.

The district will also include this information, or a plain language summary, in student/family handbooks.

Cross-ref: 4526, Computer Use in Instruction
4526.1, Internet Safety
5300, Code of Conduct

Ref: Education Law §2803
Price v. New York City Board of Education, 51 A.D.3d 277, lv. to appeal denied, 11 N.Y.3d 702 (2008) (District may ban possession of cell phones on school property)
NYSED, *Prohibition of Cell Phones and Electronic Devices in New York State Assessments*, www.nysed.gov/educator-integrity/prohibition-cell-phones-and-electronic-devices-new-york-state-assessments

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